

Governor Pat McCrory's Inaugural Address, As Prepared for Delivery

Raleigh, North Carolina
Saturday, January 12, 2013

Good morning and welcome.

Let me tell you why we're here today-- at a new location with a different view. We're here on historic grounds with our majestic and beautiful State Capitol behind us looking out at our capital city and the rest of our state.

We're at the intersection of government and Main Street.

We're also here to respect our rich history with many of our past and present leaders to help us understand that the good things in our state haven't happened by accident, they happened through hard work.

Some of those leaders are here with us today.

Our state legislature, our council of state and members of the judiciary along with members of our federal delegation. Thank you for being here.

I'd like to extend a special welcome to Governor Bob McDonnell. Virginia shares a common border and our rich tradition in history. We're looking forward to working with you Governor, and at times competing with you as well.

And welcome to my friends and my family here today, especially my wife Ann. North Carolina is going to have a great First Lady in Ann McCrory.

I'd also like to thank Governor Easley and Governor Jim Martin for being here.

And my good friend Lieutenant Governor Jim Gardner, thank you for being here.

To Governor Bev Perdue, a special thank you. Governor, I thank you for your many years of public service to this state and the people of North Carolina.

Not too long ago, it was main streets just like this that brought my parents to North Carolina in 1966.

When our family moved to Guilford County, North Carolina was poised to be the role model of the new south for the next 40 years.

It was a state where civil rights activists became pioneers for their courageous stands in Durham and Greensboro.

It was the place to locate new industries that built things, designed new products and created high-tech jobs.

We became a financial and transportation hub for the nation and the world.

We built a university system that attained a reputation for quality education, research, affordability and a strong workforce.

Like thousands of others, my parents realized that North Carolina was the place to live, work and raise a family. Because of their decision, I stand here today.

My dad, Mac McCrory, wrote a draft of a book called Anatomy of Achievement, and it guides me today.

In it he said, "For society, the reality is that mankind is going to solve its problems and fulfill the covenant." My dad taught me that each one of us have been given the talent and ability within ourselves.

Now it's each of our responsibilities to fulfill our potential.

Main Streets-- from Raleigh and across the state-- are similar today as they were when our family moved here. They are the hearts of our communities.

But we know there is pain right now in those communities. Too many people are out of work. Our state's unemployment is the fifth highest in the country, and many of our leaders in Washington struggle to find solutions together.

There is another way.

As I look out toward Main Street with government at our back, I see unlimited opportunity. Government should not be a barricade or an obstacle to progress. Our face and our approach should be outward, not inward.

We must share that philosophy and that approach to main streets across North Carolina. From Greensboro to Goldsboro, from Tarboro to Carrboro, from Asheville to Elizabeth City.

We know this philosophy works because we've done it before.

My parent's and your parent's North Carolina was a state filled with unlimited opportunity-- opportunity not only for them, but for their kids to get a good education, get a job and fulfill their potential.

It is time for us to make sure that North Carolina fulfills and even exceeds that potential once more.

One thing is certain: North Carolina's greatest strength and asset remains its people. On those main streets across this state, it's the people that count and that make a difference.

People who come from different backgrounds but share a common set of principles: self-starters and hard workers.

And the ultimate self-starters and entrepreneurs are our farmers. While I may have been a mayor of an urban area - I love and respect those in agriculture.

They know the workings of markets and the economy better than anyone else, including those on Wall Street.

They've kept our state strong for generations, and we must continue to grow as they do.

Manufacturing also is what brought my Dad here, and we know it is an important part of our state's economy. But many of those jobs left as manufacturing and competition changed.

People across the globe are looking for quality products, and we need to once more see "Made in North Carolina" labels all across the globe.

But those products can't be delivered without a strong and trained workforce matched to the skills required by employers. I am convinced North Carolina can be a leader in manufacturing once again.

Goods should be able to travel through our state like no other in the country, and the transportation industry can continue to thrive with a 25-year plan that we will implement.

North Carolina also has been a pillar in Finance but the past several years have brought significant challenges to the industry.

We've all felt the pain, and we're continuing to feel it today.

And we are of course known as the friendliest state for the Military. We honor their service, and when our soldiers come home, their leadership and skills will help grow our economy.

Even travel and tourism, that once thrived in our state, has felt the pressure from competition as other states built up their brands. It is time to polish up our brand and once more say, "Come check us out."

Agriculture, Manufacturing, Transportation, Finance, the Military, Travel and Tourism, and many more.

We've had great successes, but some wounds that had been camouflaged were uncovered and exposed, especially during this recession.

We face challenges as a state. Today we are setting a new strategy and vision to unleash the strength of our industries and the entrepreneurial talent and energy of our citizens. We will lead the way once again.

Government cannot solve all these problems alone because there is no new money falling out of the sky. Like struggling families across our state, government has to live within its means. We should not ask for more money from you, because the result is more pain to families and small businesses on Main Street.

Instead, government is going to pay its bills, moving away from borrowed time and borrowed money.

Government will work with you to form partnerships, encourage entrepreneurship and promote an environment that encourages growth, innovation, research and intellectual curiosity.

Government must work with business as partners-- not against them as adversaries-- to identify and eliminate burdensome taxes, rules and regulations that stifle economic growth.

While states around us have created jobs and fundamentally reformed the way their governments operate, we have too often relied on short-term solutions to complex long-term problems.

For far too long, our state's departments and agencies have operated in silos, often ignoring the needs of the very people we serve and creating inefficiencies with your tax dollars.

We have the opportunity to transform our culture of government through a top-to-bottom assessment of efficiency, effectiveness and customer service.

We will find efficiencies and work together as a government, collaborating and sharing resources across departments and agencies. We will institute the highest ethical standards for all who serve in government. Through our actions, you will know that we understand this is your government.

My cabinet is already working to identify these efficiencies and find ways to collaborate, share resources and be more effective.

As mayor of Charlotte, I emphasized teamwork, and we got things done. A team effort and a philosophy to succeed is what we are bringing to state government.

As our team competes for jobs on a highly competitive playing field, quality education for all students-- traditional and non-traditional alike-- is a key to our success.

There is a basic disconnect today between the needs of employers and the skill sets of the unemployed and under-employed. As I said, we have the 5th highest unemployment rate in the country. And yet - businesses cannot find qualified applicants to fill the jobs?

We have the opportunity to have an education system that works so our students are achieving better results.

We can do better. We must do better. We will do better.

I spoke to Governor Hunt about education matters on Thursday, and even though he is not here today, the focus on education is. And the difference now is technology; that changes the game.

We have at our fingertips the technology that opens up a world of knowledge at the click of a button and a connection to the Internet.

By embracing and employing new technologies, we can connect our students with the best teachers and professors and the best information throughout North Carolina and around the world.

There is no limit to what every student in North Carolina can learn and achieve. And this leads to more efficiency as well, which will save our state money.

This technology has no boundaries. It reaches and teaches the poor, the rich, the urban and the rural. It provides a wide open opportunity that is restricted only by our own creativity. Let's unleash the technology.

Let's encourage our teachers and our students to use it. Let's do it. Let's lead the effort in North Carolina.

We also must improve feedback with businesses, matching learning skills to the needs of the marketplace. There is no excuse then if we do not get people off unemployment and into good jobs.

In our high schools, two-year, and four-year schools, we will provide unlimited opportunity and multiple pathways to success through vocational and professional development.

I believe there are two core functions of education. We must exercise and use our brains, and ignite the spark of potential that each of us have that will lead to success.

During this past week, while visiting Asheville, Greensboro, New Bern, Charlotte, and today in Raleigh, we started a conversation and a dialogue for the future, challenging ourselves to think boldly, willing to ask why and taking the right steps together - as a team.

Through our actions, let's show our young people that public service is an honorable profession. And when coupled with civility - respecting the rights and opinions of others to agree and disagree - we make better decisions and get even better results.

As governor, my approach will be to expand agricultural exports, unleash our energy resources, harness new technology in education, create a climate for existing businesses to expand and new businesses to locate and grow jobs while rebuilding our brand.

We will put North Carolina on a better road to recovery. We will grasp our potential from every Main Street throughout North Carolina.

Working together, we can make North Carolina the place of unlimited opportunity-- a place where anyone who studies hard, works hard and lives a life with high values, can fulfill and even exceed their potential.

Thank you.

God bless you and God bless the state of North Carolina.